38TH CONGRESS, 1st Session. | SENATE. | Ex. Doc. No. 41.

MESSAGE

OF THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

COMMUNICATING,

In compliance with a resolution of the Senate of the 27th of April, information in regard to the condition of affairs in the Territory of Nevada.

MAY 2, 1864.—Read, referred to the Committee on Territories and ordered to be printed.

To the Senate of the United States:

In compliance with the resolution of the Senate of the 27th instant, requesting information in regard to the condition of affairs in the Territory of Nevada, I transmit a copy of a letter of the 25th of last month addressed to the Secretary of State by James W. Nye, the governor of that Territory.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

WASHINGTON, *April* 29, 1864.

Governor Nye to Mr. Seward.

TERRITORY OF NEVADA,
Executive Department, Carson City, March 25, 1864.

SIR: This Territory, since I had the honor last to communicate with you, has been making rapid progress in all things pertaining to moral and material improvement. Churches have been built, school-houses erected, and in almost every town in the Territory substantial improvements in every branch of industry are made, giving us quite the appearance of an old-settled country. Business is becoming thoroughly systemized, and carried on with a vigor I never witnessed in any other locality. Obstacles that would seem insurmountable in many places, here seem only to quicken the zeal and the energies of our people. They ply themselves with a will absolutely irresistible. Mountains are tunnelled; shafts are sunk thousands of feet through solid rock; rivers are turned from their channels; canals are made, conducting water for fifty or sixty miles; roads are constructed over our highest mountain peaks with a wonderful facility and rapidity; mines are opened and quartz mills erected as by magic; cities spring up like the "gourd in the night;" wealth is going out and coming in to the Territory with a power of current in its flow that bears us along on the wave of excitement, not unlike the early days of California discoveries. We have taken out of our mines and exported within the last year about twenty millions of dollars. Much of the proceeds of this wealth has been laid

out in permanent improvement in the Territory. In machinery for the hoisting of ores, pumping the water out of the mines, building of mills, improving of farms, opening new mines, improving those already worked, and in various ways indescribable, this amount of money has been laid out in the Territory. I entertain no doubt that much more has been expended here than our mines have produced. Large amounts of foreign capital are constantly coming, and being expended in developments before anything is realized from the mines or the improvements. This will undoubtedly be the case for many years to come, so long as new discoveries are made. The discoveries of mineral wealth in the last year are truly wonderful, and are constantly being made by our enterprising and hardy prospecters, who are seen everywhere, on the desert and the mountain side, in the valleys and the plains, with the implements for digging and the chemicals for testing all at hand. If successful in discovery, in a few weeks will be seen the shaft or tunnel, with a flourishing settlement around it.

The last year has demonstrated that our soil will produce well wherever water can be produced for irrigation. This fact has turned the attention of many of our people to cultivating the soil, and they reap a rich reward from their labors. Whenever irrigation is reduced to a system, and pains taken to obtain and encourage the use of water, we shall raise all of the vegetables and much of the coarse grain we shall need for consumption.

During the past few months we have had considerable political excitement in our Territory. The legislature of 1862 passed a law authorizing a convention for the purpose of framing a State constitution, with a view of asking admission as a State into the Union at the present session of Congress. The convention convened, framed a most excellent constitution, (a copy of which has been forwarded,) and submitted it to the people for ratification, which they failed to adopt. The reasons why it was not ratified are very obvious to those who were here and cognizant of the circumstances. The constitution contained quite stringent provisions in regard to the right of suffrage. This arrayed all the disloyal or secession element against it. It likewise contained a provision for the taxing of mines, which was unpalatable to the miners, (or some of them.) Neither or both of the above causes would have defeated it, but it was submitted at the same time that the election for State officers was held, and the dissatisfaction with some of the State ticket, and the proceedings of some of the county conventions, caused its opponents to act in concert, and, all combined, they were strong enough to defeat it. The convention held in Virginia City, in the county of Story, the largest city in the Territory, which, together with the county, was entitled to one-third of the entire representation of the Territory, instructed their nominees for the legislature to vote against taxing the mines, thereby nullifying one of the plainest provisions of the constitution. The action of that convention alarmed the ranchmen, or farmers, for the reason that, if the leglislature should not pass laws for the taxing of mining property, the whole burden of supporting a State government would fall on them. Acting under this apprehension, many of this class of persons joined with the disaffected for other reasons, and defeated it.

There is no doubt of the loyalty of the people; good, true Union men have a majority in every precinct of the Territory. It is true there are too many disloyal people here; enough to annoy and perplex us all the time. The more recent immigration across the plains is strongly tinctured with secession proclivities. Most of it is from Missouri, southern Illinois, and southern Indiana, and many of them from the scattered rebel armies of the southwest. This character of immigration will be greatly increased the coming season; still I think the increase of the Union population will be more than adequate to keep them in a minority. The struggle between the two parties has been an earnest one, and many times embittered. I have exerted myself to the utmost to keep it under control, and have succeeded better than I expected. The real heart of

this people is with the government, and nothing can alienate it. The people approve of all the measures adopted by the administration to put down the rebellion, and heartily desire that the utmost exertions of the nation shall be put forth to accomplish that object. Nevada will cheerfully give her men and treasure to aid and assist the government in any way indicated by it.

We have raised in the Territory within the last two years one company of infantry, now attached to a California regiment, a battalion of cavalry, consisting of six companies, four of which are in the field; the remaining two will be there also as soon as they can be mounted. In addition, we are raising a regiment of infantry, now in a good state of forwardness, and we can raise a brigade easily if necessary.

The Indians throughout the Territory have been quiet and peaceable, and I think will remain so. They seem to be peacefully inclined. The whites are getting so numerous that I apprehend no difficulty from Indians.

The legislature at its last session passed but few laws of a general nature. What they did pass were beneficial, and clearly within the scope and purview of the "organic act." They passed a law, or rather incorporated a provision in the practice act, embracing substantially the features of the California specific contract act. I thought it had a tendency to depreciate the currency of the country, and I *vetoed* it. It occurred to me that it was not becoming in a dependency to do anything detrimental to the interests of the country. I hope my action upon that question will be approved.

We have learned by telegraph that Congress has passed an enabling act for the admission of our Territory as a State, prescribing what some of the features shall be. I doubt not the provisions suggested will be readily adopted by our people. Indeed, the constitution submitted recently had all the main features required by the enabling act, and very few among the masses objected to it for that reason. I am confident that the people will gladly avail themselves of the opportunity afforded them by the enabling act to take their stand, as a sister State, by the side of those now battling for their rights.

We are about to hold a Territorial convention for the purpose of sending delegates to the national convention, whether allowed to vote therein or not. We are willing and anxious to meet and mingle our efforts with the States for the preservation of our glorious institutions, and ratify by our action our gratitude for the energy and integrity displayed by all having in charge our country's management and administration.

Our Territory is quite free from debt; we owe less than $15,000, and when the revenue of the present year is collected we shall have a surplus of more than that amount. In this respect I think we compare favorably with our sister Territories.

The government currency does not meet with much favor here. Most of our inhabitants have been so long in California, and accustomed to gold and silver as a currency, it will take time for their prejudices to wear away. If we could have a bank established here, it would do more for this country and this coast than anything else to convince them of their error upon this subject. I understand that such an institution is contemplated; I hope it may be done.

We here flatter ourselves that the present season will bring our troubles so near a close as to dispel at least any apprehension for the future of our beloved country, and a nation's gratitude will be fully awarded to those who have labored so incessantly for its honor and integrity.

I have the honor to be your humble and obedient servant,

JAMES W. NYE,
Governor of the Territory of Nevada.

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State, Washington, D. C.

71.2009.084.04429